

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 PARIS 001004

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [SENV](#) [ENRG](#) [KPAO](#) [FR](#)

SUBJECT: KYOTO: FRENCH MEDIA REACT TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROTOCOL

1. Summary. The implementation of the Kyoto Protocol, which takes effect today, dominates headlines in the French print press, and is the focus of a number of special reports,

supplements and editorials. Embassy Paris offers this analysis of the principal themes in the coverage over the last two days, especially as the press notes President Chirac's intention to raise the issue with President Bush in Brussels next week. Commentaries reiterate that after years of negotiation, the Protocol is finally being implemented despite the refusal of the world's primary polluter, the U.S., not to ratify it. They emphasize the notion that the U.S. chose unilaterally not to ratify the Protocol for purely economic reasons. Other journalists, commentators and specialists do cast doubts on the real difference that this treaty can make in reducing global greenhouse gas emissions, and accept the legitimacy of the U.S. reasons. These commentaries, nevertheless, also often highlight the Protocol's importance as symbol, and deplore the loss of a unified position among the world's most developed nations on an issue of global consequence. The February 16 edition of left-of-center Le Monde highlights President Chirac's proposal not only to achieve the goals set out by the Kyoto Protocol by 2012, but to go beyond them: "Jacques Chirac is determined to involve the U.S. in developing a strategy to save the environment even if Mr. Bush has shown that he is unconcerned by the issue. [But] American companies are realizing that it will be difficult to continue on their own in a world that is for the most part controlled by the Protocol." End summary.

FEBRUARY 15 PRESS:

2. Right-of-center Le Figaro, which often criticized the U.S. refusal to ratify the Kyoto Protocol, prominently placed an op-ed by the Danish environmentalist and renowned Kyoto Protocol skeptic, Bjorn Lomborg, on the eve of the implementation of the treaty. Lomborg, who is the editor of "Global Crises, Global Solutions" and author of "The Skeptical Environmentalist," penned "Kyoto: A False Priority" which was translated into French by Le Figaro. Lomborg stressed that "even if the whole world (including the United States) applied the [Kyoto] Protocol to the letter for the duration of the 21st century, the effects would be practically insignificant. Kyoto is an expensive way to not do much for people who will continue to get rich in the future."

3. Economic center-right Les Echos announced an interview with the European Commissioner for the Environment, Stavros Dimas, on its front-page. In the interview, Mr. Dimas insisted that the U.S. needs to be "brought back to the negotiating table on climate change" and hopes that this issue "will be on the agenda" during President Bush's visit to Brussels on February 22.

4. Catholic La Croix carried a special science supplement announced on the front-page: "The Kyoto Protocol Will be Implemented Tomorrow, Without the U.S." The supplement's headline: "Lackluster Implementation of the Kyoto Protocol" and main report lament that "without the U.S., the Protocol loses a great deal of its effectiveness." The editorial in La Croix by Dominique Quinio titled "First Victory," refers to the years of negotiation that were necessary to "finally reach implementation." Quinio poses the question "about the actual effectiveness of a protocol from which the largest polluter, the U.S., has excluded itself. [However] One hundred and forty one countries have agreed to find answers together. This form of multilateralism, which President Bush does not want, is very good news."

5. Weekly news magazine L'Express focuses on "post-Kyoto" and asks: "In the end what is Kyoto good for?" Environmental journalist for L'Express Marion Festraets remarks that, "Without the U.S. the world can continue to set ambitious goals for itself, but in the end they will amount to nothing."

FEBRUARY 16 PRESS

16. "The Fight Against Global Warming Becomes a Reality for 141 Countries" headlines the front-page of left-of-center Le Monde. Two full pages are devoted to the Kyoto Protocol under the title: "Reluctantly Washington is Forced to Change." The report and the unsigned editorial stress that "Things are changing on the other side of the Atlantic. Indeed the American administration will not only have to take into account its isolation on the international front, Mr. Bush is used to this, but it will also have to listen to its own changing public opinion." The editorial mentions President Chirac intends to bring up the issue of global warming with President Bush in Brussels later this month but fears that Chirac's objective to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 will only serve to "goad President Bush. If Europe decides that

it wants to go beyond the terms of Kyoto it will have to involve the southern countries. Europeans will then have to choose between appeasing the U.S. and convincing China."

17. Right-of-center Le Figaro devotes a full-page to the Kyoto Protocol and the daily's Washington correspondent, Philippe Gelie, insists the implementation of the Protocol underscores the "international isolation and internal contradictions of the U.S. Not only was the Bush administration incapable of stopping the rest of the world from moving forward without it. but the alternatives it has proposed have failed miserably." continue on their own in a world that is for the most part controlled by the Protocol." End summary.

18. Centrist business-oriented La Tribune's front-page announces the "Mobilization of the World Against Global Warming " and carries a two-page report entitled: "The Kyoto Protocol: A Small Step for a Huge Challenge." La Tribune's New York correspondent, Lysiane Baudu, pens an analysis: "In the U.S. Nature Comes After Business" in which she affirms that at the national level the measures taken for the environment "are not brilliant" but that at the state level, the mobilization is such that the U.S. could almost meet the terms of the Kyoto Protocol. She adds that while the U.S. does not "completely shun its responsibilities, it puts business before nature."

19. Economic center-right Les Echos carries three op-eds devoted to Kyoto: "Kyoto is Here . Now We Just Need To Act" by three members of the French branch of the international NGO Climate Action Network; "A Challenge for World Governance" by the Director General of the steel giant Arcelor and president of the association Businesses for the Environment; and the last piece "Dr. Jekyll, Mr. Hyde and the Climate" by French engineer Jean-Marc Jancovici.

110. In Catholic La Croix, former Socialist Prime Minister Laurent Fabius pens an op-ed in which he calls for French government "action rather than words." "We must rejoice over the Kyoto Protocol's implementation, even if it is only partial and comes late. But now it is important to act. In France there is a major discrepancy between President Chirac's words and France's reduced environmental budget, which has earned us last place in Europe."

111. The editorial in left-of-center Liberation by Patrick Sabatier calls the implementation of the Protocol "a small step for diplomacy, but a huge step for humanity. Progress will only be made if we spend as much on research as we do on weapons. Western society is built on the consumption of natural resources, with the U.S. leading the way. The political revolution will be to impose the need to master energy consumption and to base all policies on the need to conserve energy resources."

112. Center-right popular daily France Soir also refers to the treaty as a "First Step for the Planet" while center-right popular daily Le Parisien titles: "You, Too, Can Contribute to Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions" putting forward seven ways to change one's habits in order to save energy.

113. Regional dailies La Voix du Nord and Nord- lair, feature articles covering the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol and highlight the "American refusal" to ratify the treaty because of fears that its industries would be subject to the constraints of the agreement.

114. Comment: In general, French print media coverage of climate change and the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol tends to follow the official views of the French government set out in an op-ed by Environment Minister Serge Lepeltier in popular center-right daily Le Parisien, i.e., that developing nations such as China or India are exempt from having to meet the terms of the Protocol despite the fact that they are benefiting from significant economic growth; that the U.S., which produces more CO2 than any other country, has refused to ratify; and that France merely needs to "stabilize its emissions" to meet the conditions of the treaty and intends to go well beyond these conditions by 2050. The Kyoto Protocol and climate change remain a fundamental prism through which many Europeans see U.S. unilateralism and America-first (and only) policy positions. While the French media have carried our arguments of the need for effective emission-reduction strategies and examples on U.S. continue on their own in a world that is for the most part controlled by the Protocol." End summary.

efforts in the area (interviews with U.S. experts, opeds placed by the Embassy), the coverage of the last two days demonstrates that the U.S. position on climate change still often places it as the odd man out in a global effort. Post recommends placing emphasis on the efforts the U.S. is making in this global effort and down-playing, where possible, the focus on economic growth unless it is accompanied by clear explanation that only global growth (and not only benefits to the U.S. economy) is the sine qua non of developing nations' ability to participate in emissions reductions.

115. Embassy Paris renews its request to increase speaker-team programming in climate science and climate friendly

technologies. U.S. leadership in these fields is by all measures impressive. We were pleased to note that today in Brussels GEOSS's formal framework was implemented.
Leach